

WHATCOM COUNTY SOLID WASTE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
AUGUST 20, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive, Whatcom County
Scott Korthuis, Mayor, City of Lynden
John Perry, Mayor, City of Everson
Jon Mutchler, Mayor, City of Ferndale
Bonnie Onyon, Mayor, City of Blaine
Kyle Christensen, Mayor, City of Sumas
Brian Heinrich, Chief Administrator, City of Bellingham

Committee Members Absent

Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive
Kelli Linville, Mayor, City of Bellingham
James Ackerman, Mayor, City of Nooksack

Staff Present

Jeff Hegedus, Environmental Health Supervisor, Whatcom County Health Department
Janice Deptuch, Clerk III, Whatcom County Health Department
John Wolpers, Environmental Health Manager, Whatcom County Health Department
Kathleen Roy, Assistant Director, Whatcom County Health Department

1st Order of Business:

Elect a chair since Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive was not able to attend. In his place was Tyler Schroeder. A motion was made in Scott Korthuis and 2nd by Bonnie Onyon to nominate Tyler Schroeder as the chair. All were in favor.

Call to Order

The meeting of the Solid Waste Executive Committee was called to order by Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive on Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at Lynden City Hall.

Solid Waste Operations Update

Jeff Hegedus gave update on the Solid Waste Operations.

The Health Department Solid Waste Program conducts solid waste planning activities, regulates over 35 permitted and exempt county solid waste handling facilities, operates the county Disposal of Toxics program, monitors and maintains closed county landfills, responds annually to approximately 300 illegal dumping complaints, manages waste reduction and recycling community outreach and education programs, responds to public waste management inquiries, manages the Secure Medicine Return Program and litter and Adopt-A-Road programs, conducts planning activities and supports the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. In 2018 the Disposal of Toxics facility processed a total of 454,474 pounds of waste chemicals that were collected and reused, recycled, or properly disposed from 9,576 residential and commercial customers. The Secure Medicine Return

Program, which became fully operational in January 2019, collected and disposed of 1,053 pounds of waste pharmaceuticals. The Adopt-A-Road program resulted in the cleanup of 35,178 pounds of solid waste from 203 miles of roadway, 111 acres of land, and 18 dump sites using 2,363 volunteer hours. Birch Bay solid waste collection and July 4th cleanup efforts continue as per routine.

Waste reduction and recycling community education and outreach programs continue on track for the youth (ReSources Sustainable Schools program), adult (WSU Master Composter/ Master Recycler program) and commercial (Sustainable Connections Toward Zero Waste program) target populations. Additionally, with Puget Sound Partnership funding as implemented by Ecology, staff conducted 178 commercial solid and hazardous waste technical assistance site visits in 2018, and continues to implement the recently expanded EnviroStars program.

In January 2019, in Point Roberts we started charging for curbside pickup on any property that has a septic system. It went from 300 people to 1900 people for curbside garbage pickup with 30,000 recycling bins.

Cedarville Landfill monitoring and maintenance activities continue as per the approved closure plan. Y Road Landfills maintenance and monitoring proceeds without incident.

China National Sword: Recyclable Materials Importation Ban Impact

The national and regional impacts of the 2018 China Sword recyclable materials importation ban are increasing, and affecting recycling operations and efforts at the local level.

In 2017, China launched a program called "National Sword" to reduce importation and contamination in recyclable materials. As a result, China banned the import of many recyclable materials and lowered the contamination rate for recyclables not covered by the ban to 0.5%. China continues to ban additional recyclables and has imposed tariffs on many recyclables, increased tariffs in May 2019. China may ban the import of all waste and recyclables by January 2020.

Proposed Amendment to WCC 8.13, Solid Waste Disposal District, Regarding the Solid Waste Excise Privilege Tax

Currently, to fund solid waste programs, WCC 8.13.030, Excise privilege tax levied requires that solid waste collection companies (SSC, Nooksack Valley Disposal, and Cando Recycling and Disposal) collect and remit to the County a solid waste excise tax of \$8.50 per ton solid waste collected. However, since cans cannot be weighed curbside, a conversion from per ton to percent of invoice basis has historically been used by each hauler to invoice customers to collect the tax.

Based on customer base and rate structure, each hauler uses a different tax percentage. SSC adds a local tax of 5.0% in the unincorporated areas, and 3.7% in Bellingham; Nooksack Valley Disposal uses 4.45%; Cando Recycling and Disposal uses 2.91%. WUTC approved tariffs include these conversions as a tariff requirement. Quarterly, each hauler submits to the County a report that documents tons of solid wastes collected, and remits \$8.50 per ton. However, it is unknown if the current use of historic percentages provides an amount collected exactly equal to the amount remitted. As recommended by SWAC, with input from WUTC, staff is proposing that WCC 8.13.030, Excise privilege tax levied be amended to implement

a uniform tax, for all WUTC regulated solid waste collection companies, for both commercial and residential customers, based on percent of invoice rather than a per ton basis, exactly as implemented by the current 3.6% state solid waste tax. The excise privilege tax at county transfer stations and drop box facilities, where solid waste can be weighed at the scale, would remain unchanged at the current \$8.50 per ton.

Using Department of Revenue combined excise tax returns, provided by each hauler on a strictly confidential basis as per RCW 82.32.330, the total annual 2017 and 2018 invoiced taxable amount (combined hauler commercial and residential revenue) was calculated, and divided into the total annual 2017 and 2018 revenue received by the County from the solid waste excise tax (from the current \$8.50 per ton excise tax). Based on this calculation, for both 2017 and 2018, a solid waste excise tax of 3.3% of invoice, for all haulers, for both commercial and residential customers, would result in a revenue neutral conversion, where taxes collected would equal taxes remitted.

A motion was made to change the solid waste excise tax to a 3.3%. Motion made by Scott Korthuis and 2nd by Brian Heinrich, all were in favor.

2019-2020 Solid Waste Budget

The current financial status 2019-2020 two year solid waste programs budget will be presented by Kathleen Roy, Assistant Director for discussion and input and consideration of new program requests.

In 2018 revenue increase of \$525,000 related to amended solid waste excised tax (self-haulers did not pay before but pay now), plus County growth. In 2019 expense increase includes new 1.0 FTE and vehicle (\$105,000). In 2020 expense increase includes consultant for Comprehensive Plan update that is required every 5 years (\$100,000).

Consistent with RCW 70.95.010(8) and as per recommendations 3.3.1.(A-G) and 5.3.2.B of the 2016 Whatcom County Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan, and as recommended by the Whatcom County Solid Waste Advisory Committee and approved by the Solid Waste Executive Committee:

- a. Increase funding for the Sustainable Schools youth waste reduction and recycling education programs by \$15,000 annually.
- b. Increase funding for the Master Composter/ Recycler adult waste reduction and recycling education programs by \$15,000 annually.
- c. Increase funding for the Towards Zero Waste commercial sector waste reduction and recycling programs by \$15,000 annually.
- d. Fund a Food Recovery Initiative to divert food wastes from restaurants and grocery stores to homeless populations rather than landfills, at a level of \$30,000 annually.

A motion to accept the increase in the budget was made by Bonnie Onyon and 2nd by Brian Heinrich, all were in favor.

Open Session, Adjournment

No public in attendance, and no public comments.
Adjourn at 10:55 am.by Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive.

Jack Louws, County Executive

Date

Janice Deptuch, Clerk III

Date

DRAFT